Meletius Smotrytsky

Considerations or remarks on the disagreement in recognizing the procession of the Holy Spirit “and from the Son”

[First remark:] Eastern teachers teach that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son; Western teachers teach that the same Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and from the Son. Neither of these expressions — “through the Son” nor “from the Son”— are clearly expressed in these very words in Holy Scripture. Both those and those holy teachers mean in both of these expressions the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit, that is, that the Holy Spirit has his being from the Father through the Son or from the Father and from the Son. Therefore, it is seen that both of these confessions have equal weight, both are orthodox and catholic.

Second remark: To admit that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son only in view of the gifts is to profess faith contrary to the clear teaching of the holy teachers of the Church, for they teach that the Holy Spirit proceeds through the Son by nature, by essence, not by the manner of birth.

Third remark: To admit that the Holy Spirit proceeds through the Son from the standpoint of the one essence, and not from the standpoint of the natural order of the Divine persons, is to disturb the order of the Divine persons, and equally to affirm the

admission that the Son is born of the Father through the Spirit. Both are blasphemies.

Fourth remark: Nestorius — the first among heretics, did not admit that the Holy Spirit has his being through the Son. And Theodoret, who joined him, did not admit that the Holy Spirit has his being either from the Son or through the Son. Both of them were refuted by Saint Cyril of Alexandria, who clearly admitted that the Holy Spirit is from both the Son and the Father. It is only said that the Holy Spirit is from the Father, because he has his being from Him. Therefore, admitting that the being of the Holy Spirit is also from the Son, Cyril refuted the error of Nestorius and Theodoret.

Fifth remark: Nestorius and Theodoret, not recognizing the being of the Holy Spirit either from the Son or through the Son, are in error, it is clearly evident from the fact that the holy teachers of the Church oppose this non-recognition of theirs: the Westerners, teaching that the Holy Spirit has his being from the Son, the Easterners, teaching that it is through the Son.

Sixth remark: According to the testimony of Saint Maximus the Confessor, even before the Sixth Ecumenical Council, the Eastern Church had learned that the Western Church recognized the procession of the Holy Spirit as “and from the Son.” However, neither the Sixth Ecumenical Council nor the Seventh opposed this confession; on the contrary, the Seventh Ecumenical Council clearly recognized that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son, which no other council had done before.

Seventh remark: None of the Eastern holy teachers who lived at the time when the confession “and from the Son” had already become public in the Eastern Church, called it an error or a heresy. But the Spirit who lives in them would certainly not have tolerated this if he had judged that such a confession was a blasphemy against His majesty. Saint Damascene also touches on this confession when he says: “We do not say that the Spirit is from the Son,” but he did not call the expression “and from the Son” either a heresy or an error; this holy and wise man, who in his writings rebukes and refutes various heresies, would not have tolerated it if he had found in this confession some blasphemy against the Lord God. But, he says that, because the preposition ex - "from" in Greek usually means the primary cause, [that’s why] we (the Greeks) do not say that the Holy Spirit is "from the Son"; however, he assigns to the Son, instead of the preposition "from", the preposition "through", which means the cause in order, saying: “The Spirit is called the Son’s, not because He proceeds from Him, but because He proceeds from the Father through Him.” From this it can be seen that, in expressing himself in this way, Saint Damascene does not assert that it is not so, but that it is not said so because of heretics. Likewise in another place he says: “We do not call the Most Holy Virgin equal to Christ,” and elsewhere he clearly states this very thing, saying: “Therefore we preach that the holy Virgin is the Mother of God, because She, in a proper sense, truly gave birth to God incarnate in Her. We also know her as the Mother of Christ, because she gave birth to Christ, but since the impious Nestorius used this word to eliminate the name “Theotokos,” we call her not the Mother of Christ, but more

respectfully, the Mother of God." This is also in view of the heresy of Eunomius, who taught that the Holy Spirit — proceeds only from the Son, this saint said: "We do not say that the Holy Spirit is from the Son." Therefore, having said in another place what has already been stated above: "The Spirit is called the Son's, not because He proceeds from Him," he immediately explains: "But because He proceeds from the Father through Him." Theophylact also touches on the same confession "and from the Son." He accuses the Latins of misunderstanding, since, on the basis of the fact that the Lord Christ breathed on the apostles, they assert the procession of the Holy Spirit "from the Son"; yet he does not dare to call this confession a heresy. Although he warns against drawing the conclusion that there are two origins from such a confession, he does not accuse them of it in a single word. However, what Theophylact accuses the Latins of as foolishness, Saint Augustine and Saint Cyril of Alexandria recognized before him as their wisdom. They both make it known: by this ceremony of breathing on the apostles, the Lord Christ wanted to show that just as the breath came from His bodily lips, so the Holy Spirit, which He gave them to receive, comes from His divine lips, that is, from His essence: "This bodily breath," says St. Augustine, "was not the essence of the Holy Spirit, but an indication through a visible sign that the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father, but also from the Son." St. Athanasius also says this: "The Lord, having breathed into the mouths of the apostles, said: "Receive the Holy Spirit," so that we may understand: the Spirit that was given to His disciples is from the fullness of His Divinity." Moreover, it is worth knowing about this material about

Theophylact: in this place he denies what famous holy teachers of the Church, such as Epiphanius, Cyril of Alexandria and others, had acknowledged before him, for they confessed out loud that the Holy Spirit is from the Son; just as from the Son, as from God the Father. In this, of course, he opposes the writings of the holy Fathers.

Eighth remark: These prepositions — from and through — are often used piously in Holy Scripture one for the other and without distinction acquire the meaning of one another. Holy Scripture says: “And having understood that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law.” “Through faith” and “from faith” — mean the same thing in the [writings of] blessed Apostle Paul. The writings of the holy teachers of the Church say: “The Holy Spirit of God the Father and the Son, who proceeds essentially from both, that is, from the Father through the Son.” “From the Son” and “through the Son” mean the same thing in the holy teachers.

Ninth remark: Leaving aside the two councils on the subject of these differences between the Eastern and Western Churches and for their unity,—that of Bari in 1055 and that of the Lateran in 1215—which were held, as far as the times permitted, with the participation of the Greeks, I take into consideration and present two other, much more famous, ecumenical councils: that of Lyon in 1273 and that of Ferrara, or Florence, in 1439. At the first of these, the Greek Caesar Michael Palaeologus was present with

many Greeks and effected a union with the Romans. This union was at first strongly opposed by the then Patriarch of Constantinople, John Bekkos; He preferred to suffer much from Caesar, for he was deposed from his throne and thrown into prison, rather than agree with the union that Caesar had made. But when he carefully read the testimonies of the holy teachers of the Church, sent to him by Caesar, concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit "and from the Son," and also carefully examined the teaching on this in the teaching books of the holy fathers, he accepted the union and recognized the Roman confession concerning the origin of the Holy Spirit as orthodox and catholic. For this unia and the recognition of the orthodox Roman confession, Caesar Andronicus, son of Michael, deposed him from his throne and imprisoned him; and he preferred to die rather than depart from the truth he had already known. And at the second of these councils, that of Florence, was the Greek Caesar John Palaeologus with his brother Demetrius, the despot, with Joseph, the patriarch of Constantinople, and with the envoys of three other patriarchs, men of great learning and piety. There, after many public disputes and private conversations between the parties, the Greeks acknowledged, accepted, and signed that it was orthodox to acknowledge the origin of the Holy Spirit "and from the Son"; and the parties mutually concluded a union between themselves. None of the Greeks present at the council spoke against it, except for one — Mark of Ephesus; to Mark, Laonik Chalcocondylus adds George Scholarius, who called himself Gennadius when he became a monk, and after the capture of Constantinople by the Turks was Patriarch of Constantinople.

Only his writings, published against his own Greeks and for the Romans, convincingly indicate on whose side this very famous man was. [Here Meletius is probably talking about the works Gennadius that he published when he still was a unionist]

Tenth remark: A convincing sign of the truth of the Roman confession is also that many Greeks, having learned the truth, contrary to their Greeks and unanimously with the Romans, wrote about the origin of the Holy Spirit "and from the Son." These are John Bekkos, Gregory, the successor of Joseph, who died in Florence, and Gennadius Scholarius, all three of them — patriarchs of Constantinople, learned and pious men; George of Trebizond, Demetrius Cydones, Hugh Etherianus, Manuel Kalekas, Nicephorus Blemmydes, Joseph, bishop of Meton, Bessarion, metropolitan of Nicaea, or someone else — all of them of great fame and renowned wisdom. But among the Latins, not one has ever even scratched a finger against his own people or for the Greeks.

Eleventh remark: There is another remarkable sign of the truth of the Roman confession that the Holy Spirit proceeds "and from the Son": for almost forty years before the Council of Florence, many Greek philosophers, such as Manuel Chrysoloras, Filelfo, Moussouros, Theodore of Gaza, George of Trebizond, Manuel Moschopoulos, Demetrius Chalcocondylus, Marullus of Constantinople and others, fearing the cruelty of the Turks and seeing that the enslavement of their homeland, the Greek state, had already begun, went to the Italian lands and there, having accepted unity with the Roman Church during the schism

between the Greeks and the Romans, died. One of them, George of Trebizond, as already mentioned above, issued a writing to the monks and presbyters of Crete, in defense of the Latins and against their Greeks, on the procession of the Holy Spirit. After these sages left Greece, the Greek Athenians followed them, moving to Italy and establishing themselves there. After all, these Greeks established Greek scholarship in all Western countries, which still flourishes to this day.

Twelfth remark: The fact that the Council of Florence took place and ended in harmony and love (at which the Greeks, together with the Romans, having noticed and judged that those two prepositions — from and through — have the same meaning, recognized that the procession of the Holy Spirit "from the Son" and "through the Son" mean the same thing) is testified by respected authors, as has already been convincingly stated before; not to believe them, but to rely on invented fables, does not seem to be the behavior of a reasonable person.

Thirteenth remark: The letter of Patriarch Niphon of Constantinople to Metropolitan Joseph of Rus and the embassy from Rus to Pope Sixtus, which I mentioned earlier, cannot be lightly passed over and left without serious consideration, for they were useful and healing means in our cause. And likewise the letter of the then Patriarch Cyril [Lucaris], written in Lviv in 1601, left in the hands of Archbishop Dimitry Solikovsky of Lviv, published in print with caution published by "Lement". In it, among other noteworthy things, there are these two propositions: first, that the Greeks and Romans still have one faith and same

sacraments; second, that among us, the Rus, those who have approached unity with the Romans have acted more piously than those who, looking back at their patriarchs, do not want to approach it.

Fourteenth remark: Saint Damascene, and later Saint Nikon[of Kyivan Caves], who lived after the time of the Patriarch of Constantinople Michael Cerularius, who finally severed the Eastern Church from the Western, and almost two hundred years after Photius, and also the Church historian Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopoulos, describing the heresies that arose in the Church before their time, do not recall a single one through which the Romans were heretics. The first two would not have omitted to mention this, at least in view of their piety; and the third, writing already in the time of the schism, would not have been silent about it.

Fifteenth remark: The doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit "and from the Son" appears to be non-orthodox not because of the confession itself — for it is orthodox — but because of Photius' wrongness with regard to the Greeks. This can be seen, among other things, from the fact that at the Council of Florence the Greeks — even Mark of Ephesus! — recognized that the confession "and from the Son" was orthodox, and that only out of respect for the holy fathers of the Second Ecumenical Council did they force this addition to be erased from their Creed, but elsewhere they permitted it to be written.

Sixteenth remark: Augustine in chapter 26 of book 15, "On the Trinity," disputing, as he himself declared, about the Trinity, and himself clearly states that he believes in the procession of the Holy Spirit "and from the Son" and acknowledges it, and teaches us to believe and acknowledge it so;1 and in many other places in his writings he convinces us that this is so. This teacher, calling him by name, is accepted by two ecumenical councils—the Fifth and Sixth—and is compared in holiness of life and weight of writings with the holy teachers of the Eastern Church.

Seventeenth remark: We must consider it certain and indubitable that in the Church of the Lord Christ it is not forbidden to explain the symbols of faith more broadly than they are written; and such expansions are considered and called not additions, but explanations. This can be seen from the example of the Nicene Creed: in the Constantinopolitan Creed many words are removed from it, but also many words are expanded. This is also evident from the answer of St. Maximus the Confessor to the Manichaean, in which he admits that the holy fathers of the Second Ecumenical Council added something to the Nicene Creed, but it was not something contrary to it: they later explained that about which there were no questions at first. So when the holy fathers of the Third Ecumenical Council forbid additions to the Creed, they have in mind such additions that would contradict the orthodox faith; otherwise, when speaking of the Nicene Creed — if they say, *nothing* can be added to it — they would thereby condemn the holy fathers of the Second Ecumenical Council, who in their creed both shortened the Nicene Creed by many deletions

and expanded it by many additions. And the holy fathers themselves, having adopted such a decree, would themselves have fallen under it, since they recognized the personal unity of the Lord Christ, which was not recognized either at the First or at the Second Ecumenical Councils. Instead, after both the Third and Fourth Ecumenical Councils, Eulogius, Patriarch of Alexandria, in response to the heretics who reproached the Fourth Ecumenical Council for an addition, reinforcing his reproach with that prohibitive decree of the Third Council, says: “This is because heretical folly complains about the definition of the Fourth Council, claiming that the first Council of Ephesus completely forbids such things. But if the council, as they weave, completely forbade bringing anything, then it would certainly issue a decree against itself, since it itself adopted what no council before it had adopted: it adopted by its authority the expression “personal union,” which none of the previous councils had adopted.” Similarly, the great Ephrem responds to the heretics on the same subject, saying: “But heretics slander the Fourth Council, claiming that it was decided and decreed at it that no one would be free to propose, or write, or establish, or maintain another creed than that which had already been established. In reality, the council did not decide or decree such a thing: they shamelessly lie. Deeply respecting the creed that was established by three hundred eighteen holy fathers, it forbade anyone to dare to introduce any other faith.” Secondly, on the same topic, Saint Maximus the Confessor writes to those who questioned the Fourth Ecumenical Council: “If it is permissible to speak the truth in defense of the truth, then all the holy fathers and every council

of orthodox and holy men, using their own words, have in no way brought a different definition of faith than you foolishly, almost madly, say, but the first one, which was adopted by three hundred and eighteen holy fathers, they have further strengthened, clarifying it and, as it were, setting it out more openly for those who, through bad exposition, draw this definition and its dogmas to their godless opinion." How then and on what grounds do you accuse the holy Council of Chalcedon of having used the words of the holy fathers? Why do you repeat here and there, in writing and orally, as if it had introduced a new definition of faith? "Judge not according to outward appearance," says the Lord, "judge with righteous judgment." How is it that you accuse the fathers of the Council of Chalcedon in the same matter, and then later release them from this accusation? For if it is possible to accuse the fathers of the Council of Chalcedon of introducing a different definition of faith by using words that are not in the definition of the Nicene fathers, then it certainly follows that on the same grounds the same thing can be accused of Cyril and the hundred and fifty fathers; and on the contrary, if it is not fitting for them to be accused of such a thing, then I do not see What is the point of blaming this on the Council of Chalcedon?

***Eighteenth remark:** After the Council of Florence, when, after the death of John Palaeologus, his brother Constantine became Caesar of Constantinople and despised and tore up the union concluded at the Council of Florence, Pope Nicholas V wrote to him, rebuking him for this and threatening him with the same punishment that befell the barren fig tree: it was allowed to be dug

up and fertilized with manure for three years, but if it continued to remain barren, after those three years it was to be cut down so that it would not take up space in vain. Let us note an astonishing thing: the Pope wrote this to the Greeks in 1451, and in 1453 the Turks took possession of Constantinople. [Considering that Saint Robert Bellarmine and Meletius both got this point wrong, maybe they were taking this from some forgery that was possibly popular at the time]

Nineteenth remark: As the people used to say, whoever sins against God in any way, God punishes him. The Greeks did not object to anything among the Roman dogmas of faith so much as to the procession of the Holy Spirit "and from the Son" — and that without good reasons, out of sheer stubbornness. What punishment was given to them for this? On the very Descent of the Holy Spirit, the Turks ordered the storming of Constantinople, and the very next morning, that is, on the day of the Holy Trinity, they captured it.

Twentieth remark: The Romans, on the subject of the confession of the procession of the Holy Spirit "and from the Son," have such arguments against us that we cannot even open our mouths to them without falling into a clear blasphemy against the greatness of God. Such as this one. The Father is the first person of the Trinity, that is, the cause, the beginning, and the source of the other persons. The Son is the second person, that is, he is subsequent—not in time, but in principle—from the Father, and the first—from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the third person, so these two, from the beginning, are subsequent. If this is not

established, then there will be no order in the beginning between the Son and the Holy Spirit; and there will be no reason to present, call and recognize the Son as the second, and the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity. But both Holy Scripture and the teachings of the holy fathers teach that there is order, not disorder, between the persons of the Trinity. And they, having established this, proceeding from the words of the Lord Christ: “I and the Father are one”, argue thus. Since the Father and the Son are one in essence, and the Son in principle precedes the Holy Spirit, then the Holy Spirit cannot proceed from the essence of the Father, unless at the same time it proceeds from the Son. So say the Romans. If we do not recognize this, then we are forced to impiously divide the one and the same essence of the Father and the Son and blaspheme to speak of another, the Son's, separated from the Father, from whom the Holy Spirit does not proceed. In response to this argument of theirs, we usually point out that if, through the identity and unity of the essence of the Father and the Son, we believe in the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, then, through the identity and unity of the essence of the Father and the Holy Spirit, we will also believe in the birth of the Son from the Father and the Holy Spirit. To this the Romans answer us that such a proof is untenable: since, in view of the order of the principles, the Holy Spirit comes after the Son, he cannot beget the Son together with the Father. In this mystery, one must not only take into account the identity and unity of the essence, but also preserve the order alongside them. The first and the second are connected in the divine persons by an indissoluble bond. Again we rush to answer, resorting to the

distinction between essence and person; but since this solution of ours entails a real separation of essence from person and affirms an insubstantial person, it is impious and blasphemous.

Twenty-first remark Not to admit that the Holy Spirit proceeds "and from the Son," but to admit that he proceeds from the Father alone, leads to these two blasphemous nonsenses. The first: by this we tear in two the one and the same divine essence of the Father and the Son, or we affirm that one essence is of the Father, the other of the Son. The second: by this we separate essence from person, as if they were two different things, and affirm that the person of God exists without essence.

These are the remarks concerning the divergent confession of the Romans of the origin of the Holy Spirit “and from the Son,” which I submit, glorious Ruthenian people, to your sound judgment. They are able to clearly show us whether there is heresy in the Western Church as a result of such a confession, and whether it is right for us to avoid unity with her in view of this confession.